Fire in Punjab Mail

† 1801. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL:
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:
SHRI ABANI ROY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a devastating fire broke out recently in Punjab Mail going to Amritsar from Mumbai;

(b) if so, the reasons for out break of the fire;

(c) the number of people killed and injured due to fire;

(d) whether orders have been given to enquire the causes of fire;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(0 what measures have been taken to check recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. There was a fire in Punjab Mail going from Mumbai to Amritsar on 19.2.2000 near Bhusawal Junction. In this accident 18 persons were killed and 1 person was grievously injured. Commissioner of Railway Safety, Central Circle, Mumbai has started the statutory investigation on 20.02.2000 to ascertain the exact cause of the fire.

(f) Safety drive against carriage of inflammable articles on passengers carrying trains has been launched, along with intensification of maintenance of coaches. Public Address Systems are being used to create awareness among passengers regarding measures to fire.

Conversion of DC Rail Lines into AC

1802. SHRI SATISHCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the status of conversion of DC lines to AC between Churchgate and Virar, Mumbai CST to Igatpuri and Mumbai CST to Pune; and

(b) by when this work will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The traction power supply system in Mumbai area (from Churchgate to Virar on Western Railway and Mumbai CST to Igatpuri and Pune on Central Railway) has been planned to be converted from the existing 1500V DC to 25 KV AC system, for which works have already

†Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi.

been sanctioned. The work is planned to be executed in phases and work on first phase has already started.The entire work is expected to be completed in eight to ten years, subject to availability of resources.

Second BG line from New Jalpaiguri to Tinsukia

1803. DR. (SMT.) JOYASREE GOSWAMI MAHANTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the existing single rail track from New Jalpaiguri to Guwahati is capable of meeting the goods traffic requirement of all the North-Eastern States;

(b) if not, what alternative proposal is being considered by Government for quick movement of goods traffic to and from the regions; and

(c) whether Government would consider to lay a second broad- gauge line up to Tinsukia in Assam for effectively handling the railway traffic in the North-Eastern region; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Railways are meeting the goods traffic requirement of all the North Eastern States adequately. However, there is capacity constraint on the single line track between New Jalpaiguri and Guwahati. In order to over come this costraint, Railways are converting New jalpaiguri-Siliguri-New Bongaigaon Metre Gauge line to Broad Gauge and constructing a New Line from Jogighopa to Guwahati. With the completion of these works, an alternative route from New Jalpaiguri to Guwahati will become available.

(c) Number of trains presently being run on the section or projected to run in near future does not justify laying an additonal line between Guwahati and Tinsukia. However, following line capacity and communication improvement works are being undertaken on the section to enable the Railways to optimise the line capacity utilisation on the single line section.

1. Installation of Tokenless Block Instruments at 26 stations between Guwahati and Lumding.
2. Dhalphukuri—Conversion to Crossing Station.
3. Tetelia—Conversion to Crossing Station.
4. Thakurkuchi—Conversion to Crossing Station.
5. Barahu—Conversion to Crossing Station.